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# MASSACHUSETTS
# PUBLIC SCHOOL
# SYSTEM

COMPLIMENTS OF
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

# MASSACHUSETTS

## PUBLIC SCHOOL

## SYSTEM

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1903

# THE SCHOOL SYSTEM OF MASSACHUSETTS

THE system of public education in Massachusetts is characterized by a maximum of local independence with a minimum of central control.

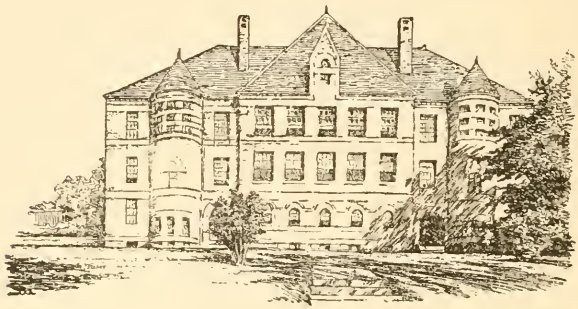
The efforts of the state are directed toward stimulating, directing and supplementing local activity. Its legislation in the main follows local public sentiment and embodies current local practices. Many of its requirements are mandatory upon a part of the municipalities and permissive to most of them. The following outline indicates chronologically the successive steps in the development of the system.

## Historical Outline

1642. The chosen men appointed for managing the prudential affairs of towns charged by the General Court with the duty of requiring parents and masters to train their children in learning and labor and other employments which may be profitable to the Commonwealth.

1647. The school system formally established by the General Court. Reading and writing schools required; also grammar schools. Expense to be borne by the towns or the parents or both at their pleasure.

1789. The school district system recognized. School inspection by the ministers and selectmen and certificates for school teachers ordered.



STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, FRAMINGHAM

1826. High schools (designation "high school" not used in the act, however) required in all towns above five hundred families; of the second grade in towns under four thousand inhabitants and of the first grade in towns above.

Every town required to appoint a school committee. Committees required to make school returns to the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

1834. School fund established, not to exceed $1,000,000.

1836. No child under fifteen years of age to be employed in a manufacturing establishment unless he

has the preceding year attended school three months out of twelve.

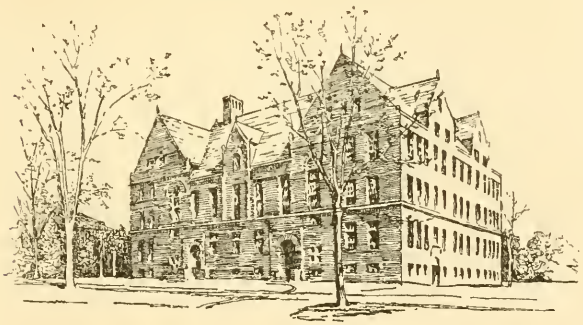
1837. State Board of Education established. Horace Mann appointed secretary of the board.

1839. First State normal school in America opened at Lexington.

Common schools to be kept at least six months each year.

1846. Teachers' institutes established.

1850. The appointment of agents of the board to visit schools authorized.



STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, WESTFIELD

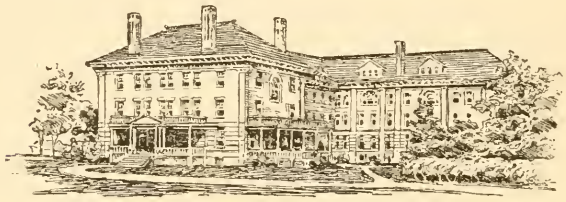
Habitual truants between six and fifteen years of age to be sent to reform or other schools.

1852. Children between eight and fourteen years

of age required to attend school twelve weeks each year, six weeks of which shall be consecutive.

1854. Superintendents of schools authorized.

1869. Towns authorized to expend money for the conveyance of children to school.



DORMITORY OF STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, WESTFIELD

1881. Women authorized to vote for the school committee.

1882. The school district system, after fifty years of controversy and the enactment and repeal of many laws relative to its continuance, finally abolished.

1883. Evening schools authorized.

1884. Free text-book law enacted.

1885. Instruction as to the effects of alcoholic drinks, stimulants and narcotics on the human system required.

1886. Permanent tenure of office authorized for teachers, if towns and cities desire it.

1891. Free high school instruction required for

every town, — towns without high schools of their own to furnish it in outside high schools.

1894. Minimum length of schooling raised to eight months.

School fund to be increased to $5,000,000 by annual additions of $100,000.

Manual training required in cities of 20,000 inhabitants or more.

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, BRIDGEWATER

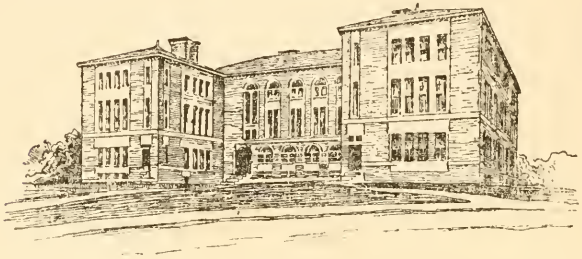
1898. School attendance, truancy and employment laws revised and strengthened.

1900. Every town and city required to employ a superintendent of schools after 1902.

1902. State aid extended to high school instruction.

**The State Board of Education**

The State Board of Education consists of the governor and lieutenant governor, *ex officiis*, and eight others appointed by the governor for a term of eight years, one retiring annually.



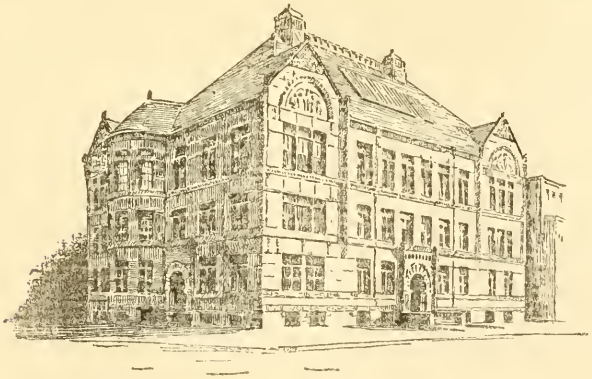
STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, SALEM

The board is responsible for the management of the state normal schools, the holding of institutes, the gathering and publishing of the school statistics of the state, the state examination and certification of teachers, and the supervision of the education of state beneficiaries in schools for the deaf and blind.

The board cares for the normal schools through committees of its own members, called boards of visitors. The members of the board serve without pay, but are allowed their traveling expenses by the state.

The board has, in general, no immediate or direct

jurisdiction over the public schools. Nevertheless, the board may, and in practice does, to some extent through its own members and in a large way through its secretary and agents, call local attention to such laws, court decisions and principles as should be heeded in the local management of the schools. And it is the practice of the local school authorities to consult the board or its officers freely on doubtful points in school administration. In many ways the board accomplishes more through these advisory relations



MASSACHUSETTS NORMAL ART SCHOOL

than if it were clothed with direct power. It wins by reason rather than by authority. The local sense, thus respected and trusted, gains in character; and in such gain lies the hope of the schools for better things.

**The Secretary and Agents**

The secretary of the Board of Education is not a secretary in the ordinary sense of the word. He does not keep the records of the board. Nor is he a secretary in a cabinet sense, for he is not at the head of

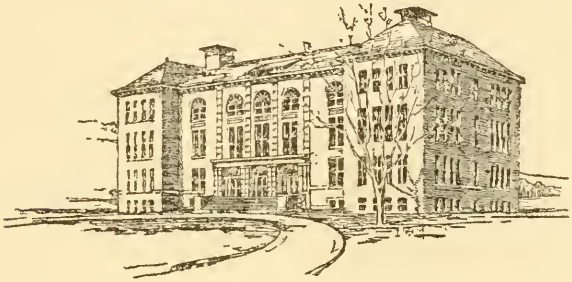
STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, WORCESTER

the educational department. It is the board that holds that place. He is usually classed with the state superintendents of schools. He works partly under the direction of the board and partly under the immediate direction of the statutes. His principal duties may be summarized as follows: —

To make abstracts of school returns, collect information respecting the condition and efficiency of the public schools and other means of popular education, and distribute the same for the benefit of the General Court and the public.

To suggest improvements in the school system to the board and to the General Court.

To visit schools, make educational addresses, hold institutes, and serve as one of the two commissioners of the Massachusetts school fund.



STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, FITCHBURG

To perform such miscellaneous duties as would naturally fall to the chief executive officer of the board.

The board employs several officers called agents.

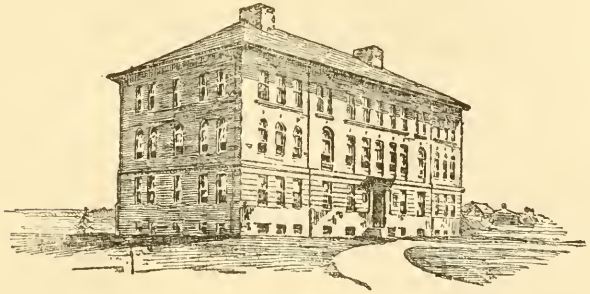
Their duty is to visit the schools, confer with teachers and the school authorities, give educational addresses, receive and give information in the same manner as the secretary, and in general to promote through advisory means the welfare of the public schools. Without them the board's knowledge of the schools would be largely restricted to statistical details. With them, the board sees the schools as they actually are.

Besides the general duties mentioned above, the following special duties are assigned to individual agents: the state examination and certification of teachers; the inspection of high schools for the purpose of state aid; the inspection of normal schools; the promotion of industrial drawing.

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, NORTH ADAMS

**Normal Schools** The General Court on the 19th of April, 1838, appropriated $10,000 to be expended by the board at its discretion in training teachers. Edmund Dwight of the board had offered to give $10,000 for the purpose if the General Court would grant an equal amount. The offer of a building and other aid by interested persons led to the selection of Lexington for the first school. Rev. Cyrus Peirce, who had taught with uncommon success as principal of the public school at Nantucket, was chosen principal. This school was for young women only. On the opening day, July 3, 1839, there were but three that presented themselves for exami-

nation. Later others appeared, so that the first class numbered twenty-five, of whom several are still living (1903). The course of study was only one year long and included, on the one hand, ordinary academic work in the subjects to be subsequently taught, and, on the other, the principles and art of teaching. A model school of some thirty children, gathered from the districts of the town, gave facilities for observation and practice. In 1844 the school was transferred to West Newton and in 1853 to Framingham,



STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, HYANNIS

maintaining its organization and integrity, however, through all its migrations, and it has, therefore, the high distinction of being the first state normal school in America.

The second of the three normal schools projected by the board was opened at Barre, Sept. 4, 1839,

under Rev. S. P. Newman, for many years professor of rhetoric in Bowdoin College, Maine; and the third at Bridgewater, Sept. 9, 1840, under Col. Nicholas Tillinghast. Both of these schools were for young men as well as for young women.

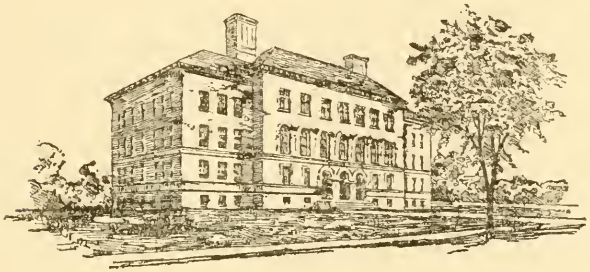
The state normal schools at present are as follows:

| Normal Schools. | First Opened. | Present Principal. |
|---|---|---|
| Framingham, | July 3, 1839, at Lexington, | Henry Whittemore. |
| Westfield, | Sept. 4, 1839, at Barre, | Clarence A. Brodeur. |
| Bridgewater, | Sept. 9, 1840, | Albert G. Boyden. |
| Salem, | Sept. 14, 1854, | Walter P. Beckwith. |
| Boston, Normal Art, | Nov. 11, 1873, | George H. Bartlett. |
| Worcester, | Sept. 15, 1874, | E. Harlow Russell. |
| Fitchburg, | Sept. 11, 1895, | John G. Thompson. |
| North Adams, | Feb. 1, 1897, | Frank F. Murdock. |
| Hyannis (Barnstable), | Sept. 9, 1897, | W. A. Baldwin. |
| Lowell, | Oct. 4, 1897, | Frank F. Coburn. |

Candidates for admission must have attained the age of sixteen, if young women and of seventeen, if young men. They must be graduates from a four years' high school course or must have received an equivalent schooling. Their fitness for admission is determined: —

1. By their standing in a physical examination.
2. By their moral character.
3. By their high school record.
4. By a written examination.
5. By an oral examination.

The courses of study range from two years to four. Graduates of colleges and teachers of experience may select a course that can be completed in a year and receive a certificate therefor. Generous observation



STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, LOWELL

and training facilities are furnished. Each school has a marked individuality. One is for the training of drawing teachers; a second has a department of household arts; a third conducts a summer session; a fourth puts its students more fully than the rest in entire charge of classrooms for prolonged and serious practice; a fifth has an entire system of city kindergartens at its disposal for observation and practice.

All the normal schools have dormitories, except those in Boston, Salem, Lowell and Worcester. With the exception of that at Framingham they are open

to young men as well as to young women. Tuition is free to students from Massachusetts intending to teach in the state. For others the tuition is $100 a year in the Normal Art School and $50 a year in the other schools.

When in 1896 graduation from a four years' high school course or its equivalent was made a prerequisite for admission, it was feared that the number of students might be reduced. The fear has proved groundless. Although four new schools have been opened, the attendance at all the schools has materially increased.

**Special Schools** The state provides for the education of defective children in special schools. Upon the request of parents or guardians, with the approval of the Board of Education, the governor may send to these schools for a limited term, at the expense of the state, for their instruction, support and traveling, such deaf, blind and feeble-minded children as he may think proper subjects for education. The Board of Education directs and supervises the education of such pupils. Pupils are now sent to the following schools: —

The American School for the Deaf, Hartford, Conn.

The Clarke School for the Deaf, Northampton.

Horace Mann School for the Deaf, Boston.

Sarah Fuller Home for Little Deaf Children, Medford.

The Boston School for the Deaf.

Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind, Boston.

The Massachusetts School for the Feeble-minded, Waltham.

**The State School Fund**

The establishment of a school fund in 1834 was the beginning of the direct effort of the state as such to supplement the work of the local authorities in building up the school system. When created, the fund was limited to one million dollars. It has since been increased to five millions.

For many years those beneficent measures which characterized the revival of education in Massachusetts — normal schools, teachers' institutes, and the work of the secretary and agents of the Board of Education — were carried on by means of the increase of the school fund. At the same time the towns were being aided in the support of their schools, and stimulated to greater exertion by the help afforded by the state.

As the educational system has grown, new ways of state help have been discovered, and for these as well as for the old ones direct appropriations from the treasury are made.

The entire income of the school fund is now divided among those towns of the state the valuation of which is less than two and a half millions of dollars.

## Forms of Financial Aid by the State.

1. Distribution of income of school fund.
2. Tuition of high school pupils in out of town high schools.
3. Part of the salary of district superintendents.
4. Tuition and support of deaf, blind and feeble-minded children.
5. Forty scholarships each in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Worcester Polytechnic Institute.
6. Annual appropriations to the state and county teachers' associations.
7. Support of normal schools.

# LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Under the impulse of statutory requirements and under the fostering care of the state, the towns and cities have built up, each for itself, more or less elaborate school systems. Each town and city is a unit in the management of its schools. There are no local sub-divisions for support or control.

**Kinds of Schools**

The highly organized systems of the cities and larger towns comprise kindergartens, primary schools, grammar schools, high schools and evening schools. A few support vacation schools.

In the more sparsely settled communities the ungraded school is still the prevailing type.

Kindergartens are not required by law. Nowhere are they in sufficient numbers to prepare all the children for the grades. The minimum age of admission is from three to four years, and most of the children are withdrawn on reaching the age of five, when they may be admitted to the primary schools.

**High Schools**

Provision for secondary education has been made since 1635, for many years in (Latin) grammar schools, later in academies, and since 1826 in free public high schools. These schools

are required in towns having more than five hundred families. They are authorized in smaller towns.

Towns which do not maintain high schools must pay for the tuition of properly qualified pupils who desire to attend high schools in other towns. The state reimburses towns whose property valuation is low for such tuition. Provision is made for inspection and approval by the State Board of Education of the high schools to which state-aided towns may send pupils.

Under this favoring legislation high school privileges are open to all, and are actually enjoyed by the children of nearly all the towns in the state.

**Evening Schools**

Evening elementary schools are required in towns and cities whose population exceeds 10,000, and evening high schools in cities having an excess of 50,000, if petitioned for by fifty or more residents over fourteen years of age who desire to attend such a school.

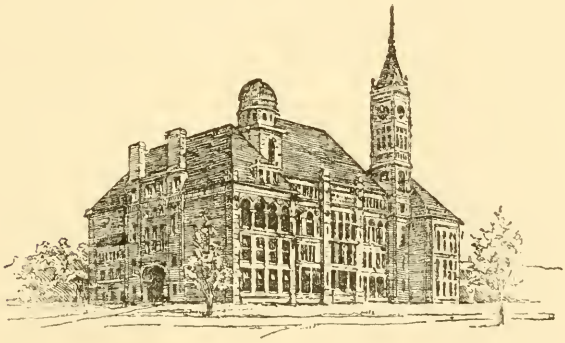
These schools must furnish instruction in orthography, reading, writing, the English language and grammar, geography, arithmetic, industrial drawing, both free-hand and mechanical, the history of the United States, physiology and hygiene, and good behavior.

**Vacation Schools**

Vacation schools are not required, but are being established in increasing numbers. In a considerable number of cities and towns they are supported at public expense, in

others by public-spirited persons associated for the purpose.

Boston also maintains at public expense what are known as educational centers. Public schoolhouses are used in the evening for instruction, chiefly of adults, in various manual arts, such as cookery, sewing, embroidery, dressmaking, millinery and woodworking, in vocal and instrumental music, in stenography



FALL RIVER HIGH SCHOOL

and typewriting, and in studies in preparation for civil service examinations.

Courses of illustrated evening lectures are also given in the schoolhouses at the expense of the school funds.

**Courses of Study**

The state in statutes names certain studies which must be taught in all schools, and others which may be taught. It also fixes a minimum length of the school year. But it prescribes no course of study. Each town and city fashions its own.

The following studies are prescribed: —

Orthography (1789), reading (1647), writing (1647), the English language and grammar (1789), geography (1826), arithmetic (1789), drawing (1870), the history of the United States (1857), physiology and hygiene (1885), and good behavior (1789).

The following subjects may be taught: book-keeping, algebra, geometry, one or more foreign languages, the elements of the natural sciences, kindergarten training, agriculture, sewing, cooking, vocal music, physical training, including calisthenics, gymnastics and military drill, civil government, ethics, and such other subjects as the school committee considers expedient.

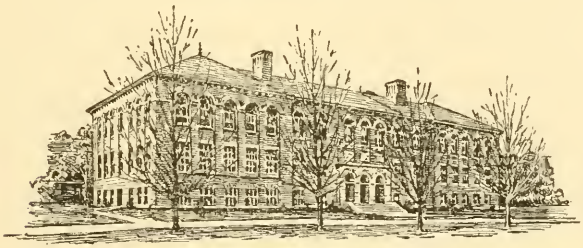
Every town and city having a population of 20,000 or more is required to provide the teaching of manual training as part of its elementary and high school system.

From all these suitable subjects may be chosen for the high schools required by law, and provision may also be made for preparing pupils for the state normal schools, technical schools and colleges.

Elementary schools must be maintained for at least thirty-two weeks in each year, but in towns having a specified low valuation the term may be reduced to twenty-eight weeks. The average length of the last school year was thirty-seven weeks.

High schools must be provided with courses at least four years in length, and must be continued at least forty weeks in each year.

Graded schools throughout the state are organized generally on a basis of a thirteen years' course, with annual promotions. Usually the first three grades are organized by themselves into primary schools in



BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL

separate buildings. The next six grades form the grammar schools, and the last four the high schools.

**Selection and Pay of Teachers**

The local school committees have full power to appoint and discharge teachers. They are required to ascertain "by personal examination" the qualifications of

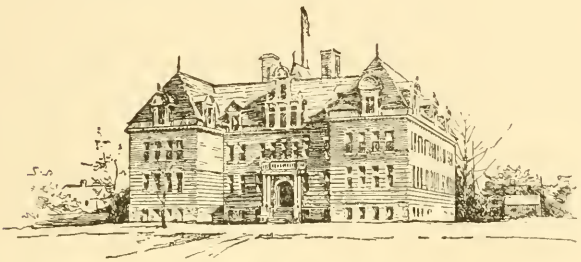
those whom they select to teach. They may accept a diploma from a Massachusetts normal school in lieu of the personal examination, but they are not required to accept it. Nor are they required to employ graduates of normal schools. In fact about forty per cent of all the teachers employed are graduates of normal schools. About fifty per cent have attended normal schools. A system of state examination and certification is to go into operation this year. Lists of holders of these state certificates are to be kept by the State Board of Education, and from these lists committees may select their teachers, but they are not required to do so.

The state by means of its normal schools and these examinations does what it can to furnish qualified teachers, but the towns and cities are free to employ them or not as they choose. That this is the best system may be a matter of doubt, but it conserves the traditional local independence.

Annual election of teachers is the prevailing custom, but committees are authorized to elect "to serve during the pleasure of the committee," and in Boston and some other cities teachers are so elected after serving a prescribed number of years, and enjoy permanence of tenure.

Of the whole number of teachers employed nine per cent are men. The average wages of the men per month are $143.33; of the women, $53.37.

**Text Books** Massachusetts has no state text-books. Each town and city selects its own under the restriction that a change requires a two-thirds vote of the school committee.



PITTSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

All text-books and other school supplies are free, that is, they are purchased by the town or city and loaned to the pupils free of charge. This applies to tools, implements and materials used in the various forms of manual training, including cookery. The average cost per pupil last year of all text-books and supplies was $1.60.

**Support of the Schools** Schools are supported mainly under the general law: "Towns shall raise by taxation money necessary for the support of public schools." The amount raised by local taxation is supplemented by state aid in some towns. A few small local funds are also available.

In Boston the amount to be raised for school purposes is limited by law to a fixed ratio of the valuation, elsewhere it is unlimited. School taxes are not assessed separately, but are included in the general budget.

The average expenditure per child last year for all school purposes, based on average membership, was $36.42. The lowest expenditure in any town was $14.94. The highest in any town was $66.31.

**Conveyance of Children** The more complete organization of the schools has been made possible in many of the smaller towns by a law which allows the conveyance of children at public expense to centrally located schools. This process began in 1869.

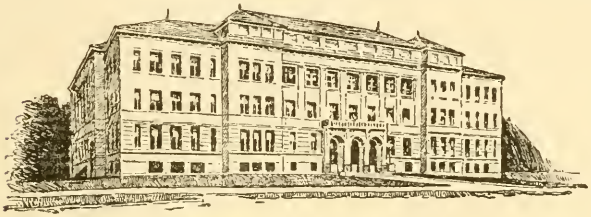
In some towns neighboring small schools have been consolidated. In others, all the children are brought to one central building. Advantage is taken of the law to pay for the conveyance of pupils living at a distance from the central high school.

**Local Supervision** In each town and city the schools are in charge of an elective body called the school committee. Women may vote for members of this body, and women may also serve on it. The members are chosen for three years, one third retiring annually.

They have full authority and responsibility under the statutes for the management of all public schools,

and from their action no appeal lies to any central school authority.

Every town and city, either alone or in a union district with other towns, is required to employ through



SPRINGFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

its school committee a superintendent of schools to have the care and supervision of the schools, under the direction and control of the committee. The powers and functions of this officer are not further defined by law.

It is the policy of the state to equalize educational opportunities by aiding the poorer towns. It does not relieve them from the burden of local taxation, but it so offers its help as to stimulate the towns to larger efforts. Thus the towns enjoy increased advantages, while preserving their self-respect.

This policy is well illustrated in the plan of union districts for supervision. In order that all the towns may enjoy the benefits of professional supervision,

small towns were at first allowed, but are now required to unite in districts and employ a superintendent. These districts may consist of two or more towns, the valuation of each of which is less than $2,500,000, and the aggregate number of schools in all of which is not more than fifty nor less than twenty-five, or of four or more towns the valuation of each of which does not exceed $2,500,000, without reference to the minimum limit in the aggregate of schools. These districts are required to raise each year for the salary of the superintendent seven hundred and fifty dollars. To this the state adds twelve hundred and fifty dollars, three fifths for the salary of the superintendent, and two fifths for the salaries of teachers.

This plan insures to those districts having a limited number of schools to be supervised the entire time of a superintendent, with a minimum salary of fifteen hundred dollars. The average salary of the superintendents of the state last year was $1879, only sixteen receiving less than $1500. While no specific powers are delegated to these officers by law, in fact they are exercising all the most important functions of supervision. With some local exceptions, they frame courses of study, select text-books, and nominate teachers. They have proved a powerful influence in elevating the school standard throughout the rural communities.

**School Attendance and Truancy**

The period of required school attendance is between the ages of seven and fourteen. Children between these ages must attend all the time the schools are in session.

The school committees are required to appoint truant officers whose business it is to see that attendance laws are enforced.

For the care of habitual truants the counties are required either separately or jointly to maintain county truant schools, to which boys may be committed after conviction, on complaint of a truant officer. Truant girls are sent to the State Industrial School for Girls.

**Employment of Children**

No child under the age of fourteen years may be employed in any factory, workshop or mercantile establishment. No such child may be employed for wages during the hours when the schools are in session, nor before six o'clock in the morning, nor after seven o'clock in the evening.

No child under sixteen may be employed without an age and schooling certificate approved by the superintendent of schools.

A minor over fourteen years of age who cannot read at sight and write legibly simple sentences in the English language may not be employed unless he is a regular attendant upon an evening or day school, provided a public evening school is maintained in the city or town in which he resides.

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